DRAGON AGE™

THE MISSING

GEORGE MANN

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TOMÁS AIRA

ÁLVARO SARRASECA

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DRAGON AGE: THE MISSING
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YEAH. WE...*UMM*... HEARD THE RUMORS.
scritch
scritch
SCRITCH
THOSE RATS SOUND BIG, ***EVKA.***
WE'RE JUST GLAD WE BUMPED INTO THE TWO OF YOU. THE LAST PAIR OF GREY WARDENS TO VENTURE DOWN HERE...WELL...
WELL, ***WHAT?***
THE LAST TWO...*UMM*... DIDN'T FARE SO WELL.

YOU MEAN THEY NEVER CAME BACK, DON'T YOU?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
GREAT.
BUT THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN TO US, IS IT? BECAUSE THERE'S FOUR OF US NOW.
HOLD ON A MOMENT.
FOUR PEOPLE ARE JUST AS LIKELY TO VANISH IN THE DEEP ROADS AS TWO.
HEY, NONE OF THAT. WE'LL BE FINE. IT'S LIKE WE AGREED. YOU'LL HELP US FIGURE OUT WHAT'S TERRORIZING THE PEOPLE OF MARNAS PELL...
...AND WE'LL HELP YOU FIND WHOEVER IT IS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
IT'S A WIN-WIN.
HMMM.
AND WHEN DID YOU SAY THIS ALL STARTED?
WHEN THE NEW SEWER EXCAVATIONS ACCIDENTALLY BROKE THROUGH TO THE UNDERHOLD, A COUPLE OF WEEKS BACK.
WORK WAS HALTED. SOON AFTER, THE ABDUCTIONS BEGAN. THAT'S WHEN THE FIRST WARDENS CAME DOWN HERE TO INVESTIGATE.
I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS...

scritch
WHAT WAS THAT?
DON'T TELL ME THE FAMED VARRIC TETHRAS IS AFRAID OF A FEW LITTLE RATS.
I'M AN AUTHOR. YOU WANT ME TO DESCRIBE HOW CREEPY THIS IS, HARDING, I'VE GOT YOU COVERED.
AND NO. RATS I CAN HANDLE. IT'S THE DARKSPAWN I'M THINKING OF.
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW THAT IT WAS DARKSPAWN TERRORIZING THE FOLK ABOVE, DO WE, ANTOINE?
THE RUMORS DESCRIBE A TALL, DARK FIGURE, "EMERGING FROM THE DEEP ROADS TO DRAG THE UNWARY TO THEIR DOOM"...BUT WE HAVEN'T SENSED ANY DARKSPAWN YET.
YES. FOR ALL WE KNOW, THERE COULD BE A HUMAN OR AN ELF DOWN HERE, USING THE PLACE AS A BASE FOR WHATEVER TERRIBLE SCHEME THEY'VE CONCOCTED.

...BUT I THINK I'VE JUST FOUND OUT WHY THEY NEVER CAME *HOME.*
MAESA. I...
SHE'S AT PEACE NOW, ANTOINE.
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HER BODY ONCE WE'RE DONE DOWN HERE.
BUT WHAT ABOUT SHEV? HE WAS WITH HER. HE...
AH.
HIM TOO.
POOR SHEV.
WHAT DO YOU THINK DID THIS TO THEM?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT WHATEVER IT WAS, IT CERTAINLY WASN'T STIRRED UP BY ANYTHING AS SIMPLE AS SEWAGE WORKS.

IF THIS IS WHERE SOLAS HAS BEEN HIDING, HE'S REALLY COME DOWN IN THE WORLD.
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY WE'VE HAD SO MUCH TROUBLE FINDING HIM.
IT FITS, THOUGH. A REFUGE IN THE ASS END OF NOWHERE IS EXACTLY SOLAS'S STYLE. HE'S PROBABLY THINKING NO ONE WILL FIND HIM DOWN HERE.
HOPEFULLY HE'S NOT EXPECTING *US.*
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO IF WE *DO* FIND HIM?
BOLD OF YOU TO ASSUME I HAD A PLAN. WE STOP HIM, WHAT ELSE?
BUT YOU WERE HIS FRIEND, RIGHT? MAYBE YOU COULD, I DON'T KNOW, *TALK* TO HIM. MAKE HIM *UNDERSTAND.*
HOW ABOUT WE TELL THESE TWO? THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP US LOOK.
NO! WE CAN'T BRING THEM INTO THIS.
"IT'S TOO DANGEROUS. FOR EVERYONE."

BEFORE.
"IT'S UP TO US, AND ONLY US, TO FIND SOLAS."
I'M TRUSTING YOU WITH THIS, VARRIC.
YOU'RE DUMPING THIS ON ME? THAT'S GENEROUS OF YOU, CHARTER.
I'M AWARE.
BUT THERE'S NO ONE I--OR THE INQUISITOR--TRUST MORE THAN YOU...
...AND HARDING.

HARDING!
SHHHH.
YOU KNOW THAT'S A TERRIBLE IDEA, DON'T YOU?
YES, OF COURSE, IF ANYONE COULD TRACK SOLAS, IT'D BE SCOUT HARDING...
...AND YES, SHE WOULDN'T HESITATE FOR A SECOND TO HELP IF WE ASKED HER...
BUT?
BUT HARDING SEES THE BEST IN PEOPLE, AND SOLAS CAN MANIPULATE THAT. GET HER TO HESITATE.
AND IF WE'RE GOING UP AGAINST THE DREAD WOLF, WHO BROKE THE WORLD AND CAN TURN PEOPLE TO STONE, THAT HESITATION IS GONNA GET HER KILLED.
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE.
I NEED THE PERSON WHO PUTS TOGETHER THE TEAM TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT SOLAS IS CAPABLE OF.
TEAM? ME AND HARDING, SURE. BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN ON A TEAM THAT DIDN'T GET STABBED IN THE BACK.
THEN MAKE IT A SMALL TEAM. LIKE I SAID, THERE'S NO ONE I TRUST MORE THAN YOU.
GREAT. NO WAY THIS COULD GO WRONG. AGAIN.
YOU'LL FIND A WAY. YOU MUST FIND A WAY.
WE BOTH KNOW WHAT'S AT STAKE IF YOU DON'T.

SO, I GUESS WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MISSING CITY FOLK NOW, TOO.
I'D HOPED...
WE BOTH HAD.
THOSE RATS ARE GETTING AWFULLY CLOSE.
SCRITCH SCRITCH
THOSE AREN'T RATS...
DEEPSTALKERS!

SKREEEE
UNGH!
I KNEW THEY WEREN'T RATS.
PHUTT
SPLICK
ARGHH!
ANTOINE!
SKREEE
SHUNK
MORE COMING!
GET READY.
SCRITCH SCRITCH

BEFORE.
VISCOUNT TETHRAS! IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU!
AND YOUR HAT!
CALL ME THAT AGAIN AND I'LL HAVE YOU ARRESTED AND PUT IN THE STOCKS.
OH NO. YOU WOULDN'T DO THAT. YOU'RE THE BEST VISCOUNT KIRKWALL'S HAD IN THIRTY YEARS. ALL THOSE REBUILDING PROJECTS...YOU'VE WON THE PEOPLE OVER.
AND THAT'S THE WORST OF IT, RIGHT THERE. I GET SHIT DONE. I'M GOOD AT IT.
AND THAT GETS ME INTO TROUBLE.
WHICH BRINGS US TO WHY YOU'RE HERE.
YOU'RE SURE YOU'RE UP FOR THIS? TRACKING THE DREAD WOLF?

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN USE ME, YEAH. WHY NOT?
THIS ISN'T A "WHY NOT" KIND OF JOB. YOU KNOW WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE CAN DO.
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO STOP HIM.
HOW'S YOUR MA, HARDING? SHE DOING ALL RIGHT?
DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT, VARRIC.
I'M JUST SAYING, YOU'VE GOT MORE TO LOSE. SOLAS HAS MADE IT CLEAR HE DOESN'T WANT US INTERFERING.
WE GO UP AGAINST HIM, THERE'S NO GUARANTEE ANY OF US COME BACK.
I KNOW.
BUT IF WE DON'T STOP HIM, THERE'S NO GUARANTEE ANYONE SURVIVES ANYWAY. I'VE FOUND A LEAD. WORD THAT HE'S BEEN WORKING OUT OF A REFUGE IN THE DEEP ROADS BENEATH MARNAS PELL.
THIS COULD BE OUR CHANCE, VARRIC. OUR ONE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND HIM.
I'M WILLING TO GO, IF YOU ARE.
OH, IF IT'S THE DEEP ROADS...
WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?

GLICKK
THAT SEEMS TO BE THE LAST OF THE UGLY BASTARDS.
AT LEAST WE KNOW WHAT'S BEEN TAKING ALL THOSE PEOPLE.
AND WHAT'S BEEN FOLLOWI--
THUD
THUD
THUD
SIGH
WHAT DO I KEEP TELLING YOU ABOUT *TEMPTING FATE,* HARDING?

RRRAAAARGGGH!

TWANG
RARRRGHH!
KILL IT!
I'M TRYING!
OH. GREAT.
RAARGH!
SHUNK

THUD
WELL. THAT WAS UNEXPECTED.
HANG IN THERE. WE'LL SEE TO THOSE WOUNDS IN NO TIME.
WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE FOR SOMEONE TO LOOK OUT FOR ME LIKE THAT.
STILL, AT LEAST WE SEEM TO HAVE PUT AN END TO YOUR LITTLE TROUBLE.
YES. JUDGING BY THAT THING'S CHOICE OF WEAPON, IT'S SURELY THE ONE BEHIND THE ABDUCTIONS.
SIT STILL!
YOU SEE TO ANTOINE'S WOUNDS. WE'LL TAKE A QUICK LOOK AROUND, JUST TO BE SURE THERE'S NO MORE OF THEM LURKING.
ALL RIGHT. BUT BE CAREFUL.

HERE. *LOOK.*
THINK THAT MIGHT BE WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR?
SOLAS'S HIDEOUT? I DIDN'T THINK HE'D BE ANYWHERE NEAR DARKSPAWN.
STILL WORTH A LOOK, THOUGH!
HE *WAS* HERE. AND RECENTLY.
I'M SURPRISED HE WAS STAYING SO CLOSE TO THE DARKSPAWN.
ME TOO. HE ALWAYS HATED THE BLIGHT. ONE OF THE FEW THINGS WE AGREED ON.
SO WHY STAY DOWN HERE?
HE DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYONE ELSE COMING BY TO VISIT.
AND GOING BY WHATEVER THIS MAGICAL CRAP IS, HE KNEW HOW TO KEEP THE DARKSPAWN OUT.
HMMM.

THEN WHY DID HE LEAVE AT ALL?
AND IN SUCH A HURRY?
HE'S UP TO SOMETHING.
HUH...
WHAT? YOU GOT SOMETHING?
AN INVITATION...
You Are Cordially Invited
to Call Upon
THE LADY CRYSANTHUS
At her Home In Vyrantium
At Your Earliest Convenience.
"...ONE WE SHOULD PROBABLY KEEP."

THAT WASN'T THERE WHEN WE CAME IN, WAS IT?
NO. IT DEFINITELY *WASN'T.*
ANOTHER DEAD DEEPSTALKER.
TWO SLASHES ALONG ITS BACK.
AND ITS THROAT HAS BEEN CUT IN AN *X* PATTERN. I'D BET THE KILLER WAS WIELDING TWO SHORT BLADES.
SEE HERE?
YEAH.
WHICH MEANS IT WASN'T EVKA OR ANTOINE.
I'VE SEEN KILLS LIKE THIS BEFORE... COULD BE *VENATORI.*
THEN LET'S GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE WHOEVER DID THIS COMES BACK.
AGREED.

ALL CLEAR.
IT'S *OVER.*
WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH. WE...WELL, WITHOUT YOU...
WE'D HAVE ENDED UP LIKE MAESA AND SHEV. WE OWE YOU OUR LIVES.
WE'LL SETTLE FOR A WARM BED, A HEARTY MEAL, AND A STIFF DRINK. NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER.
DID YOU FIND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?
NOT TODAY. BUT WE'RE GETTING THERE. AREN'T WE, HARDING?
WHAT? OH YES. OF COURSE.
"GLAD WE COULD HELP.
"WE'LL BE MOVING ON SOON, ANYWAY.
"WE HAVE AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT TO KEEP...
"...IN *VYRANTIUM...*"

splish
ARGGGGGGH.
SHIT.
YOU'RE HAVING ONE OF THOSE DAYS, *HUH,* VARRIC?
ONE OF THOSE DAYS?
I'M HAVING ONE OF THOSE WEEKS! OR MONTHS...
...GIVEN THAT YOU'VE DRAGGED ME THROUGH ENDLESS MILES OF RUDDY ***SEWAGE.***
OH, SO IT'S ***MY*** FAULT NOW, IS IT?
BESIDES, HOW ELSE WERE WE GOING TO GET INTO ***VYRANTIUM...***

...WHILE IT'S UNDER SIEGE BY THE ANTAAM?
YOU THINK SOLAS WOULD HAVE CRAWLED THROUGH A CITY'S WORTH OF SHIT TO GET HERE?
I THINK HE PROBABLY HAS A BETTER SENSE OF *TIMING* THAN THE TWO OF US.
AND LET'S FACE IT--IT TOOK US LONG ENOUGH TO GET HERE.
"FIGHTING OFF BANDITS IN THE ARMAEL HILLS.
"FENDING OFF DESPAIR DEMONS AT THE WAVA RIVER CROSSING.
"TAKING A WEEKLONG DIVERSION TO DEAL WITH ANTAAM SLAVERS."
"AND SPENDING SEVERAL DAYS SUFFERING FROM FOOD POISONING AFTER CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESS IN SAID DIVERSION A LITTLE *TOO* ZEALOUSLY..."
AND *NOW* LOOK AT US.
COME ON, WE'D BETTER FIND SOMEWHERE TO GET CLEANED UP...

"...BEFORE WE PRESENT OURSELVES TO THIS *LADY CRYSANTHUS* CHARACTER."
WHAT'S OUR COVER STORY? I'VE HAD SO MANY...
WE'RE RESPONDING TO THIS FORMAL INVITATION ON SOLAS'S BEHALF.
I DUNNO, HARDING. IT SEEMS SOMEWHAT... *DUBIOUS.*
RAT-A-TAT
creeeeeak
YES?
AH, GOOD. YES. I AM VISCOUNT TETHRAS OF KIRKWALL, AND--
YOU? THE VISCOUNT OF KIRKWALL?
YES. AND?
WE'RE HERE TO SEE LADY CRYSANTHUS. AT HER *INVITATION.*
IMPOSSIBLE!
LADY CRYSANTHUS IS INDISPOSED AND HAS NOT ISSUED ANY FORMAL INVITATIONS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.
GOOD-BYE!
THAT WENT WELL.
SLAM
SIGH
WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
WHAT WE ALWAYS SHOULD HAVE DONE.

"WE FIND OUR OWN WAY IN."
ARE YOU *SURE* THIS IS A GOOD IDEA?
SHHHH. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE BEING *SUBTLE.*
AND YES, I'M SURE IT'S A GOOD IDEA.
IN FACT, I'D GO AS FAR AS TO SAY IT'S A *GREAT* IDEA.
WELL, I'M STARTING TO THINK IT'S A *TERRIBLE* IDEA.
FWASH
MAGICAL WARD? SO MUCH FOR SUBTLE.
SUBTLE IS OVERRATED.

YOU WON'T BE SAYING THAT WHEN THAT VALET COMES AT YOU WITH A KITCHEN KNIFE.
AT LEAST THAT MIGHT MEAN THERE'S SOME FOOD AROUND HERE. I'M *STARVING.*
EMPTY. MUST BE ONE OF THE SPARE BEDCHAMBERS.
A HOUSE THIS BIG MUST HAVE PLENTY OF THEM. THINK OF ALL THE VISITORS. ARISTOCRATS, POLITICIANS, SYCOPHANTS...
COUGH
BUT THIS ONE HASN'T BEEN USED FOR *MONTHS.*
FOOOM!
VARRIC.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO SEE THIS...

NO WONDER LADY CRYSANTHUS HASN'T ISSUED ANY NEW INVITATIONS...
SHE'S BEEN TURNED TO STONE.
THAT CAN ONLY MEAN...
...SOLAS WAS HERE. HE'S THE ONLY ONE WE KNOW WHO CAN DO THAT.
BUT WHY KILL AN ARISTOCRAT WHO'S INVITED YOU TO DINNER?
FUNNY...

...I WAS ABOUT TO ASK YOU SOMETHING VERY SIMILAR.
ME?
DO I LOOK CAPABLE OF TURNING A WOMAN TO STONE?
EXACTLY WHAT I'D EXPECT SOMEONE TO SAY IF THEY DID HAVE THE POWER TO TURN A WOMAN TO STONE.
I THINK IT'S OBVIOUS THAT IF WE COULD PETRIFY YOU, YOU WOULDN'T BE TALKING. BUT MORE TO THE POINT, WHAT ARE TWO ANTIVAN CROWS DOING HERE?

I'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT WAS OBVIOUS TOO.
WE'RE HERE TO ***KILL*** HER.
IF IT TURNED OUT SHE WAS UP TO NO GOOD.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE TOOK OUR CONTRACT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, EXACTLY, ***"UP TO NO GOOD?"***
THERE WERE RUMORS OF UNSAVORY CONNECTIONS. QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED.
AND SPEAKING OF ***QUESTIONS,*** YOU SEEM TO BE THE ONLY ONES ASKING THEM. SO WHY DON'T YOU TELL US WHO ***YOU*** ARE, AND WHAT EXACTLY ***YOU'RE*** DOING HERE?
WELL...
MY NAME IS LACE, AND--
WE'RE WITH THE ***INQUISITION.*** WE'RE TRACKING A ***DANGEROUS FUGITIVE,*** AND THE LAST LEAD WE HAD WAS THAT HE WAS COMING HERE, TO VYRANTIUM, TO VISIT THIS LADY CRYSANTHUS.
TING!
AND YOU THINK THIS FUGITIVE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HER ENDING UP LIKE ***THIS?***

PROBABLY. BUT THE QUESTION IS *WHY?* AND WHAT DOES IT *MEAN?*
QUESTIONS THAT THE CROWS WOULD LIKE ANSWERS TO AS WELL. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE LADY CRYSANTHUS WAS WORKING WITH THE *VENATORI.* BUT WE DON'T YET KNOW TO WHAT END.
VENATORI...
MY NAME IS VARRIC TETHRAS. AND THIS IS LACE HARDING. AS I SAID, WE'RE WITH THE INQUISITION. AND IF THIS WOMAN WAS IN LEAGUE WITH THE VENATORI, WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHY. IT MIGHT HELP US TRACK DOWN THIS...*POTENTIAL THREAT* WE'RE TRAILING.
I AM VIAGO DE RIVA. THIS IS...TEIA.
ALL WE KNOW IS THAT THE VENATORI ARE PLANNING SOMETHING. A POSSIBLE MOVE AGAINST THE TEVINTER IMPERIUM.
AND THAT LADY CRYSANTHUS IS--*WAS*--HELPING THEM OPERATE FREELY IN VYRANTIUM WHILE THEY LAID THEIR PLANS.
THEN PERHAPS--
IN THERE! *QUICKLY!*

TRESPASSERS! I KNEW IT! *KILL THEM,* NOW!
SO TEDIOUS.
AND PREDICTABLE.
ZUT
POW
OH NO. I DON'T THINK SO. WE'D LIKE A WORD WITH YOU FIRST...

BUT... BUT...I'M JUST THE *VALET...*
AND VALETS KNOW *EVERYTHING* THAT GOES ON IN A HOUSE LIKE THIS.
WHILE *WE* KNOW THE LATE LADY CRYSANTHUS WAS HELPING HER VENATORI FRIENDS IN THE CITY. WE WANT INFORMATION.
THERE MUST BE RECORDS. WHERE DID SHE KEEP THEM?
I DON'T--
THINK CAREFULLY. JUST A SINGLE CUT, AND YOU'LL FIND THE POISON QUITE DEADLY.
GULP
IN HERE! IN *HERE!* JUST DON'T... DON'T...
I HAD *NO PART* IN HER SCHEMES.
PUSH THAT PANEL OVER THERE.
THIS ONE?
click
IF I HAD A SOVEREIGN FOR EVERY SECRET DOOR...
CLUNK
GRIND
skreeeeee e

LOOKS LIKE LADY CRYSANTHUS WAS QUITE THE SPYMASTER.
JUST LOOK AT IT ALL.
SHE WAS UP TO HER NECK IN IT. THOSE ARE KNOWN VENATORI AGENTS.
CAN WE FIGURE OUT WHAT THEY WERE PLANNING?
YOU'VE KILLED US ALL! JUST BY BEING HERE...
DON'T MIND HIM. YOU WERE SAYING?
URKK!
THAT'S THE FOREST OF ARLATHAN. ONLY A FEW DALISH CLANS LIVING THERE.
MAGIC HAS RUN WILD IN ARLATHAN FOR THE LAST THOUSAND YEARS. WHAT DO THE VENATORI THINK IS THERE?
THIS, IT LOOKS LIKE.
AN ARTIFACT CALLED... THE CRUCIOUS STONE? SOME SORT OF MAGICAL WEAPON.
tap tap
WANTED

ELVEN, BY THE LOOK OF THOSE RUNES.
WHICH EXPLAINS WHY IT'S IN ARLATHAN.
BUT WHAT DOES IT DO?
IT'S NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR.
BUT THESE COLLECTED LEGENDS SEEM TO SUGGEST THAT THE CRUCIOUS STONE COULD BRING THE IMPERIUM TO ITS KNEES.
NO WONDER SOL--
AHEM
NO WONDER OUR TARGET HAS GOTTEN HIMSELF INVOLVED.
YOU THINK HE WANTS IT FOR HIMSELF?
USE IT, DESTROY IT, MONOLOGUE ABOUT IT. WHO KNOWS?
IS THIS A CONTRACT OR AN OLD FLAME?
WELL...
SO WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR TARGET GETS HIS HANDS ON THIS ELVEN ARTIFACT?

IF HE DOES, I SHALL TAKE IT FROM HIM AND MAKE HIM SUFFER FOR WHAT HE DID TO MY BELOVED WIFE...
...AFTER I HAVE SILENCED YOU.
SIGH
NOT AGAIN.
MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE GONE FOR SUBTLE, AFTER ALL.
"GREAT IDEA," YOU SAID!
REAL GREAT!

FOOL! YOU'LL BURN US ALL!
POM
ARGHHH!
UNGH!
CREEEAK

UNGHHH!
THUD
UNTIL DEATH DO YOU PART...
COME ON. THE WHOLE PLACE IS GOING UP. WE'VE GOT TO GET CLEAR!
BUT THE EVIDENCE...
LEAVE IT.
"SUBTLE," HE SAID.

WHAT NOW?
WE KEEP GOING. OUR... TARGET MUST HAVE GONE TO ARLATHAN, LOOKING FOR THIS CRUCIOUS STONE THING.
YOU COULD COME WITH US? IF THINGS IN VYRANTIUM HAVE GOTTEN A LITTLE...HOT FOR YOU NOW, I MEAN.
NO. WE HAVE A DUTY TO REPORT WHAT WE KNOW. THE CROWS MUST BE MADE AWARE THAT THE VENATORI ARE SEEKING TO MAKE A CONCERTED MOVE AGAINST THE IMPERIUM.
THEY MUST BE STOPPED.
BUT WE WISH YOU GOOD FORTUNE AND--
SNICK
THERE. IN THE ALLEYWAY.
WAIT!

THERE!
IT'S NO USE GIVING CHASE. THEY'LL BE LONG GONE BEFORE WE GET OVER THAT WALL.
WHAT WAS IT?
I DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT THEM...BUT I THINK IT WAS A *VENATORI ASSASSIN.*
MORE OF THEM. VYRANTIUM MUST BE CRAWLING WITH THEM.
OR...
OR?
OR THEY WERE FOLLOWING US.
FOLLOWING YOU AND TEIA, OR ME AND HARDING?
I DON'T KNOW.
BUT WHATEVER YOU DO, WATCH YOUR BACKS AS YOU MAKE FOR ARLATHAN.
"ONE THING WE CAN ALL BE CERTAIN OF--WHATEVER IT IS THEY'RE AFTER, THE VENATORI DON'T GIVE UP EASILY..."

Nocen Sea
Straits
Arlathan Forest
TEVINTER IMPERIUM
"WHEN THEY SAID THINGS HAD GOTTEN A LITTLE STRANGE IN ARLATHAN FOREST..."

...THEY WEREN'T JOKING.

VARRIC?
VARRIC.
LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE COMPANY.
HMMM?
AH! HELLO THERE, MY DALISH FRIENDS.
NOT JUST DALISH.

AND *YOU* ARE?
AS HE SAID. WE'RE *FRIENDS.* I'M LACE HARDING OF THE INQUISITION, AND THIS IS--
THE *INQUISITION.* HERE, IN ARLATHAN?
ahem
VISCOUNT TETHRAS OF KIRKWALL. BUT YOU CAN CALL ME VARRIC.
FORGIVE THE INTRUSION. WE...*AH*...
...WE'RE HERE BECAUSE OF A VENATORI PLOT WE UNCOVERED IN VYRANTIUM.
A PLOT?
THE VENATORI ARE ATTEMPTING TO LOCATE AN ARTIFACT CALLED THE "CRUCIOUS STONE," THOUGHT TO BE HIDDEN SOMEWHERE HERE IN THE FOREST.
WHATEVER IT IS, THEY PLAN TO USE IT AS A WEAPON AGAINST THE TEVINTER IMPERIUM.
THE CRUCIOUS STONE!
SO YOU'RE HERE TO STOP THEM? JUST THE TWO OF YOU?
NO. WE'RE HERE TO FIND IT *FIRST.* PERHAPS THAT WAY WE CAN STOP IT FALLING INTO THE WRONG HANDS AND DIVERT THE VENATORI'S ATTENTION AWAY FROM ARLATHAN.
AND I SUPPOSE YOU EXPECT US TO HELP YOU?
NO. I *EXPECT* NOTHING FROM YOU. EXCEPT PERHAPS YOUR BLESSING TO PASS THROUGH THE FOREST.
YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT ALONE.
THANKS FOR THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE...
MY NAME IS *STRIFE.*
AND I'M *IRELIN.* BEHIND ME, THE GRINNING ONE IS *BINDE,* AND THE OTHER IS *TIST.*
WE'RE *VEIL JUMPERS.*

AS IN, YOU JUMP AROUND IN *THAT?*
THAT'S WHAT'S BECOME OF ARLATHAN. A WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN. A PLACE WHERE CHAOS REIGNS. THAT'S WHY WE'VE FORMED THIS GROUP.
THE VEIL JUMPERS REPRESENT AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE BEST DALISH MAGES AND HUNTERS--
--AND OTHER NON-ELVES, SUCH AS BINDE--WILLING AND ABLE TO HELP CONTAIN THE THREAT.
AND *THAT'S* WHERE WE'LL FIND THE CRUCIOUS STONE?
IF YOU CAN FIND IT.
OR *IF* YOU SURVIVE THE JOURNEY.
WHICH I SOMEHOW DOUBT.
GREAT. FILL ME TO THE BRIM WITH CONFIDENCE, WHY DON'T YOU?
I DON'T THINK THIS IS A GOOD IDEA. THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY'RE LETTING THEMSELVES IN FOR.
THEN WE DON'T *HAVE* ANY CHOICE. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO WITH THEM.
sigh
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT. BESIDES, IF WE HAD TO DEAL WITH THE VENATORI, THEY'D BE FAR LESS... GENIAL.

DID YOU HEAR THAT, HARDING? GENIAL. IT'S LIKE HE KNOWS US ALREADY.
TIST, BINDE. HEAD BACK TO THE SANCTUM. INFORM THE OTHERS. WE HEAD OUT IMMEDIATELY.
IF YOU'RE SURE...
I'M FAR FROM SURE. BUT YOU HEARD IRELIN. WE DON'T REALLY HAVE MUCH CHOICE.
AND DON'T YOU GO THINKING ANY OF THIS IS GOING TO BE EASY. THE CRUCIOUS STONE IS RUMORED TO BE HELD IN A VAULT INSIDE AN ANCIENT TEMPLE, DEEP INSIDE THE VEIL.
IRELIN-- THE MAP?
TO REACH THE TEMPLE, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FACE A SERIES OF DANGEROUS TRIALS.
A GAUNTLET THAT PASSES THROUGH A ZONE WHERE SPIRITS TRADE PLACES WITH THE LIVING.
ANOTHER WHERE TIME RUNS OUT OF ORDER.
AND FINALLY, AN AREA WHERE UP IS DOWN, AND DOWN IS UP.
AND THAT'S ALL BEFORE WE FACE THE VARTERRAL THAT GUARDS THE TEMPLE.
STRIFE'S RIGHT. THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY. AT ALL.
THEN WE'D BETTER GET STARTED, HADN'T WE?

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU MADE SUCH A BIG DEAL ABOUT THIS SO-CALLED *GAUNTLET.* ASIDE FROM THESE WEIRD REFLECTIONS, THIS PLACE DOESN'T SEEM SO BAD.
DON'T SPEAK SO SOON, VISCOUNT. THE SPIRITS ARE COMING.
GET READY. IT CAN PROVE... *UNSETTLING.*
WHAT THE--
ARGHHHHH!!
BUT...BUT... WHAT...?
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY THROUGH THIS STRETCH OF THE FOREST.
TO ALLOW THE SPIRITS TO TEMPORARILY SWITCH PLACES WITH US WHILE WE MOVE THROUGH *THEIR* REALM INSTEAD.

IT'S...ME. I'M RUNNING AWAY.
MOVE! WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY.
WHY? WHAT HAPPENS IF THEY GET AWAY?
THEN YOU'LL BE TRAPPED DOWN HERE. FOREVER.
WE'VE GOT TO RECLAIM OUR PHYSICAL FORMS FROM THE SPIRITS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THEIR DOMAIN.
HOW DID I KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO SAY THAT?
HARDING! I TAKE IT ALL BACK! PERHAPS WE SHOULD JUST LET THE TEVINTER IMPERIUM BURN, AFTER ALL!
SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!
SNAP
URGHHH.

VARRIC! HURRY!
NOW!
HERE GOES NOTHING...
SKREEEEK!

Unghhh...
I AM NEVER DOING THAT AGAIN.
HARDING?
I'M OKAY.
WE'RE ALL OKAY... SOMEHOW.
BUT I SHOULD WARN YOU...
...THE SKY HERE IS THE WRONG WAY ROUND.
BLURRGHHH!

JUST GIVE ME A MOMENT TO GET MY BEARINGS.
ROAAR
THERE'S NO TIME.
THE FOREST PREDATORS HAVE ADAPTED FAR BETTER THAN US TO THEIR NEW HUNTING GROUNDS.
MAKING THE FOUR OF US *EASY PICKINGS...*
ROOAAR
RUN!
RAAAR
TRY TO STICK TOGETHER. *AND KEEP TO THE PATH!*

REALLY? BLOODTHIRSTY WILDLIFE?
GO! GO! GO!
THUNK
THUNK
ROOAWR

HUFF
WHAT THE FUCK?
RAARGH
UNGH!
WHAT...WHAT'S HAPPENING...?
SO... WEAK...
NO!
OOMPH!
THUD
I THINK IT'S BETTER I DON'T EVEN TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT JUST HAPPENED...

WHERE HAVE *YOU* BEEN?
HUFF
WHEN HAVE I BEEN, YOU MEAN?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
JUST TELL ME--AM I SPORTING ANY UNEXPECTED GRAY HAIRS?
YOU'RE LUCKY. TIME'S BEEN DISTORTED IN SOME SECTIONS OF ARLATHAN. EVENTS SPIRAL OUT OF ORDER, AND CAUSE AND EFFECT CAN FALL WEIRDLY OUT OF SYNC.
DID YOU SEE ANYTHING UNEXPECTED?
THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A VENATORI ASSASSIN.
MIGHT?
IT'S LIKE STRIFE SAID. TIME WAS ALL...*MESSY.* I CAN'T BE SURE WHAT I SAW.
TREAD CAREFULLY. WE'RE CLOSE TO THE TEMPLE NOW. WE'D BETTER HURRY.
I THOUGHT I SAID I WASN'T DOING ANY WEIRD UPSIDE-DOWN STUFF AGAIN...?

AND HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GET PAST *THAT?*
THE GUARDIAN OF THE TEMPLE. A *VARTERRAL.*
HE LOOKS GRUMPY.
HE WILL BE WHEN WE TRY TO GET PAST HIM TO THE VAULT.
DON'T WORRY. I'VE GOT A PLAN.

JUST GET READY TO RUN.
BUZZZZZZZ
BUZZZZZZZ
WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT?
BUZZZZ
CREEAK
BUZZZZZZ

THERE! THE VAULT! WE MADE IT.
BUZZZZ
BY THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH. YOU WEREN'T WRONG, IRELIN--THINGS IN ARLATHAN ARE A LITTLE MORE...CHAOTIC THAN I'D IMAGINED.
COME ON. LET'S SEE WHAT THIS CRUCIOUS STONE IS ALL ABOUT, SHALL WE?
VARRIC?
IT'S OPEN.
THEN WE'RE TOO LATE. THAT VENATORI YOU SAW BACK THERE...THEY'VE GOT TO THE CRUCIOUS STONE ALREADY.
NO. I DON'T THINK SO. THAT ASSASSIN...THEY SAVED ME.
SAVED YOU?
FROM THE LEOPARD. I DON'T THINK THIS WAS THE VENATORI. I THINK IT WAS...

...SOLAS.
Varric
WHO'S SOLAS?
AND WHY IS HE USING THE ICON OF THE DREAD WOLF AS HIS SEAL?
SOLAS IS WHO WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.
Varric
AND AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, HE IS THE DREAD WOLF. AN ELVEN MAGE, NOT A GOD. BUT STILL...
You need not have worried. The artifact was never in danger of falling into Venatori hands. I hope that in time you give up this pursuit. What must be done will be done cautiously, and I will limit the damage as best I can. I have no wish to be the villain in one of your stories, but interfering in matters you do not understand can only make things worse.
-Solas
YOU'RE JOKING. YOU'VE GOT TO BE.
I'M AFRAID WE'RE NOT. I KNOW IT'S A LOT TO TAKE IN...
IT IS. A LOT.
BUT IF IT'S TRUE...
IF AN ELVEN GOD WALKS AMONG US, USING THE CRUCIOUS STONE...
...IT COULD EXPLAIN WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE IN ARLATHAN.
IT'S GOING TO BE HAPPENING EVERYWHERE UNLESS WE FIND HIM.
WE'LL FIND HIM. WHATEVER IT TAKES, AND WHATEVER HE THINKS ABOUT MY INTERFERENCE.
SOLAS HAS TO BE STOPPED, AND YOU AND ME?
WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN DO IT.

AHH, CIVILIZATION.
AT *LAST.*
FILL YOUR LUNGS WITH THAT, HARDING.

WITH WHAT? THE RANCID SMELL OF OVERFLOWING SEWERS? THE VOMIT OF A THOUSAND DRUNKS?
WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM HOME, VARRIC. AND WE SHOULDN'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE.
AREN'T *YOU* JUST A BARREL OF LAUGHS TODAY?
IN FACT, YOU'VE BEEN MISERABLE EVER SINCE WE LEFT ARLATHAN. WHAT'S GOING ON, HARDING?
MISERABLE, IS IT?
WELL, *QUIET,* THEN. NOT YOURSELF. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
AND *YOU* KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, VARRIC. ALL THAT TIME WE WASTED LAYING A SO-CALLED TRAP FOR A VENATORI ASSASSIN WHO NEVER EVEN SHOWED UP.
WE'VE LOST PRECIOUS DAYS. TIME WE *SHOULD* HAVE SPENT PICKING UP SOLAS'S TRAIL. WE COULD HAVE BEEN HERE IN MINRATHOUS *DAYS* AGO.

SO YOU'VE SAID. REPEATEDLY.
BUT IT HAS TO MEAN SOMETHING, DOESN'T IT?
FIRST THE VENATORI ARE IN THE DEEP ROADS, THEN THEY'RE IN VYRANTIUM AND ARLATHAN. IT'S CLEARLY NO COINCIDENCE.
WHAT DOES IT MATTER? IT'S JUST A DISTRACTION. IF THEY'RE TRYING TO STOP US FROM GETTING TO SOLAS, IT'S WORKING.
BUT WHAT IF THEY'RE NOT TRYING TO STOP US? IF THEY WANTED TO KILL US, THEY'D HAVE MADE THEIR MOVE BY NOW. INSTEAD, IT'S LIKE THEY'VE BEEN LOOKING OUT FOR US. WATCHING OUR BACKS.
THE DEAD 'SPAWN IN THE DEEP ROADS. SAVING ME FROM THE LEOPARD IN THE FOREST...
SO NOW YOU THINK THEY'RE OUR SECRET BODYGUARDS?
NO. BUT WHAT IF IT'S ALL LINKED? TO SOLAS.
SOMEHOW.
THEN THAT'S EVEN MORE REASON TO FOCUS ON FINDING HIM.
NOT THAT WE EVEN HAVE A PLAN FOR WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DO.
I'M GOING TO TALK TO HIM, TELL HIM--
AND WHAT IF TALKING'S NOT ENOUGH? WHAT THEN?
WHAT ARE YOU SUGGESTING?
RIGHT NOW?
THAT WE NEED SOME HELP.
ALL RIGHT. THAT I CAN DO.
THERE'S A WOMAN HERE IN MINRATHOUS...

"AN INVESTIGATOR BY THE NAME OF NEVE GALLUS. IF ANYONE KNOWS IF SOLAS HAS BEEN HERE, SHE WILL..."
NEVE!
IF IT ISN'T VISCOUNT TETHRAS OF KIRKWALL.
I'VE WARNED YOU ABOUT THAT BEFORE.
VARRIC. PLEASE.
WHATEVER IT IS YOU WANT, VARRIC, IT MUST BE IMPORTANT.
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
YOU'VE ONLY BEEN IN MINRATHOUS FIVE MINUTES. AND NOW HERE YOU ARE.
BUT...HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?
I'M AN INVESTIGATOR. IT PAYS TO HAVE EYES AND EARS ON THE CITY GATES.
SEE. I TOLD YOU SHE WAS A GOOD DETECTIVE. IF ANYONE CAN HELP US FIND SOLAS, SHE CAN.
SOLAS. NOW THERE'S A NAME I'M TIRED OF HEARING LATELY.
YOU'D BETTER SIT DOWN.

YOU'VE HEARD OF SOLAS, HERE, IN MINRATHOUS?
YOUR FRIEND IS QUITE INTENSE.
IT'S BEEN A LONG ROAD TO GET HERE, NEVE, AND OUR TRAIL HAS GONE COLD. WE NEED TO FIND SOLAS. *SOON.*
IF YOU KNOW SOMETHING, DON'T BE SHY.
AN ELF, RIGHT?
RIGHT.
HE'S BEEN HERE. CAUSING TROUBLE. WORD IS, HE ATTACKED A BUNCH OF VENATORI SITES IN THE CITY AND STOLE SOME ARTIFACTS FROM THEM. PISSED THEM OFF GOOD AND PROPER.
THAT EXPLAINS A LOT...
NO WONDER THE VENATORI ARE SHOWING AN INTEREST.
THERE'S MORE. IT SEEMS YOUR FRIEND FREED A GROUP OF ELVEN SLAVES WHILE HE WAS AT IT.
VENATORI SLAVES.
PRECISELY. SO NOW WE'VE GOT A BUNCH OF REBELLIOUS ELVES CAUSING TROUBLE THROUGHOUT THE CITY, PRESUMABLY IN THE NAME OF THE ONE WHO FREED THEM...
AND WE HAVE A LOAD OF ANGRY VENATORI HELL-BENT ON REVENGE.

SO, ARE YOU **SURE** YOU WANT TO GO GETTING MIXED UP IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL?
CAUSING TROUBLE IN MINRATHOUS IS JUST THE BEGINNING. HE'S GOING TO DO MUCH WORSE UNLESS WE STOP HIM.
WE DON'T KNOW THAT. NOT YET. THAT'S WHY WE NEED TO FIND HIM.
VARRIC, SOLAS CLEARLY DOESN'T **WANT** TO BE FOUND. HE'S ALREADY TRIED TO WARN US OFF.
AND NOW HE'S STIRRING UP TROUBLE WITH THE VENATORI.
YOU NEED TO PREPARE YOURSELF--THE ONLY WAY TO STOP HIM NOW MIGHT BE WITH AN ARROW.
THE VENATORI DESERVE EVERYTHING THEY GET. AND SLAVES **SHOULD** BE FREED. ALWAYS. WHAT IT TELLS ME IS THERE MIGHT STILL BE HOPE FOR SOLAS YET.
I'LL KNOCK SENSE INTO THE FOOL. **WHEN** WE FIND HIM.
SPEAKING OF WHICH... YOU'LL BE WELL COMPENSATED, NEVE, IF YOU CAN OFFER ANY LEADS?

I CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT, VARRIC, FOR AN OLD FRIEND...
...I CAN TAKE YOU TO SEE SOME OF THE ESCAPED SLAVES. SOME PEOPLE I WORK WITH, THE ***SHADOW DRAGONS,*** HAVE BEEN TRYING TO HELP THEM.
I HAVE WORD ON WHERE SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SOURCE FOOD.
AND IF THEY TURN OUT TO BE WORKING WITH SOLAS?
THEN YOU'LL BE ONE STEP CLOSER TO FINDING HIM.
VARRIC?
WHAT IS IT?
OH, JUST OUR UNWANTED COMPANION, SNOOPING AROUND AGAIN.
THEN THE SOONER WE GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS...

"...THE BETTER."
THIS LOOKS LIKE A ROUGH SORT OF PLACE FOR A MEETING.
IT IS.
BUT THIS IS WHERE SOME OF THE FREED SLAVES HAVE BEEN COMING TO FIND FOOD...
...COURTESY OF A SYMPATHETIC KITCHEN MAID, WHO SAVES UP THE SCRAPS AND LEAVES THEM OUT AROUND THE BACK.
HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?
THE SHADOW DRAGONS MAKE IT THEIR BUSINESS TO HELP THOSE IN NEED. AND I MAKE IT MY BUSINESS TO HELP *THEM.*
NOW-- HERE WE ARE...
RUN!

NO! DON'T...
...RUN.
sigh
ONE EACH, HARDING?
YOU GOT IT!
I'LL TRY TO HEAD HER OFF THE OTHER WAY.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO RUN AFTER HIM?
NO NEED.
HUFF
TWANG
ping

OOMPH!
NO. PLEASE. I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK. DON'T MAKE ME GO BACK...
WE'RE NOT WITH THE VENATORI. OR THE AUTHORITIES. WE'RE NOT GOING TO HURT YOU.
WE JUST NEED A LITTLE INFORMATION.
HUFF
SHE GOT AWAY.
YOU'RE GETTING SLOW, YOUR VISCOUNTSHIP...
HOW DO I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU?
I'M FRIENDS WITH THE SHADOW DRAGONS. WE'RE TRYING TO HELP ANYONE HELD AS SLAVES IN MINRATHOUS. WE WANT TO HELP YOU NOW.
YES... BUT...
THEN YOU'LL TELL US WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW?
THERE'S COIN IN IT FOR YOU. ENOUGH FOR A PROPER MEAL, FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIEND BACK THERE.
ALL RIGHT.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE PERSON YOU'VE BEEN WORKING FOR.
WE WANT TO KNOW WHERE TO FIND SOLAS.
SOLAS? YOU THINK I'M WORKING WITH HIM?
WELL, AREN'T YOU?
OF COURSE NOT. SOLAS WAS HERE, AND HE HELPED US. MORE THAN ANY SHADOW DRAGONS. MORE THAN THE AUTHORITIES. HE FREED US FROM THOSE VENATORI BASTARDS.
BUT WHY? WHAT DID HE GET OUT OF IT? SURELY, HE WANTED SOMETHING IN RETURN.
NO. NOTHING. WHEN HE ATTACKED THE VENATORI, HE SAW WHAT THEY HAD DONE TO US--HIS KIN--AND HE DID THE ONLY DECENT THING.
HE SET US FREE.
SO WHERE IS HE NOW?
HE'S LEAVING MINRATHOUS. VIA THE CANALS. IF YOU GO NOW, YOU MIGHT STILL BE ABLE TO CATCH UP WITH HIM.
THEN WE SHOULD GO. NOW.

BUT FIRST...IF YOU MEANT WHAT YOU SAID, ABOUT WANTING TO HELP...
OF COURSE.
THERE'S A GATHERING TONIGHT. AT THE DOCKS. THE REST OF US--ALL THE SLAVES THAT SOLAS FREED--WE'RE COMING TOGETHER TO TRY TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU OR THE SHADOW DRAGONS CAN DO FOR US...
TONIGHT?
BUT...I'VE HEARD RUMORS THAT THE VENATORI ARE PLANNING A BIG OPERATION TONIGHT...
THEN PERHAPS ALL OF THIS *IS* LINKED.
WHAT IF *THAT'S* WHY THE VENATORI HAVE BEEN STALKING US, HARDING? THEY'RE HOPING WE'RE GOING TO LEAD THEM TO SOLAS.
HE'S BEEN MAKING TROUBLE FOR THEM, AND NOW THEY WANT THEIR REVENGE.
AND WE'VE LED THEM *HERE.*
AND SINCE THAT ASSASSIN WAS SPYING ON OUR MEETING WITH NEVE, THERE'S EVERY CHANCE THEY'RE GOING TO THINK THESE FREED SLAVES ARE WORKING WITH SOLAS, JUST LIKE WE DID.
YOU'RE SAYING THE VENATORI ARE GOING TO COME FOR US? *TONIGHT?*
I'M SORRY. I THINK YOU MAY NEED TO CALL OFF YOUR MEETING.

THERE'S NO TIME. THE WORD HAS ALREADY GONE OUT. MY PEOPLE ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE CITY. THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD REACH THEM ALL.
IF THE VENATORI ARE COMING, THE OTHER ELVES ARE GOING TO WALK INTO A TRAP.
THEN WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING. WE HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO PROTECT THESE PEOPLE.
HARDING...
VARRIC...
HA! I THINK WE'RE FINALLY OF A LIKE MIND.
I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, VISCOUNT TETHRAS. THERE'S NO CHOICE. WE'VE GOT TO HELP THESE PEOPLE.
EVEN IF IT MEANS LETTING SOLAS GET AWAY.
YEAH. EVEN THEN.

THE SHADOW DRAGONS HAVE VOWED TO HELP US RESTORE OUR *DIGNITY.*
TO GET BACK THE LIVES THAT WERE STOLEN FROM US BY THE VENATORI.
TO MAKE SURE WE DON'T HAVE TO SCRABBLE IN THE *DIRT* FOR FOOD AND WARMTH.
I, FOR ONE, SAY THAT WE SHOULD EMBRACE THIS OFFER OF HELP THAT WE SHOU--
AH, HERE THEY ARE!
AND THEY'VE EVEN ROUNDED THEMSELVES UP LIKE THE GOOD LITTLE SHEEP THEY ARE.
NOW, REMEMBER TO LEAVE AT LEAST A COUPLE OF THEM ALIVE FOR QUESTIONING...
AND LEAVE THE RINGLEADER TO ME.
GURRK!
WHITT
WHAT THE--
ACKK!
TWANG
THAT'S ONE EACH, HARDING!
TWO FOR ME! YOU'D BETTER HURRY IF YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP UP!
TWANG

NOW!
THUNK
THUNK
CLEAR A PATH!
WOOSH
NOW THERE'S A SLICK ENTRANCE.
TWANG

GET YOUR PEOPLE OUT OF HERE. NOW!
THAT'S TWELVE TO ME.
IT'S WORKING, VARRIC!
OF COURSE IT'S WORKING!
GO! GO! GO!
AFTER THEM!

YOU!
WHISSSS
UNGH
NOW... PERHAPS YOU CAN TELL ME--
GURK!
BUT...
SHE WON'T HURT ANY OF US ANYMORE, VARRIC!

WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO THE ELVES NOW?
THE SHADOW DRAGONS WILL HELP THEM. ***I'LL*** HELP THEM. WE'LL FIND THEM SAFE PASSAGE OUT OF THE CITY. TRY TO GET THEM HOME, OR AT LEAST SOMEWHERE THE VENATORI WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND THEM.
YOU'VE A GOOD HEART, NEVE. MAKE SURE YOU LOOK AFTER IT.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE TWO OF YOU? YOU'LL CONTINUE YOUR SEARCH?
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT. HOW MUCH OF THIS DO YOU THINK SOLAS HAD PLANNED?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THINK ABOUT IT. FREEING THE SLAVES. KNOWING THE VENATORI WOULD COME FOR THEM. KNOWING WE'D STEP IN...
YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S JUST LIKE THAT TRICKY BASTARD!
HE KNEW WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO RESIST HELPING THOSE FREED SLAVES. AND THIS WAY, WE'VE ALSO DEALT WITH THE VENATORI ON HIS TAIL, ***AND*** HE'S SLOWED US DOWN LONG ENOUGH TO GET AWAY.
PERHAPS HE KNOWS US ***TOO*** WELL.
WELL, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT.
MAYBE IT'S TIME WE BROUGHT IN SOME FRESH HELP. SOMEONE SOLAS DOESN'T ***KNOW.*** SOMEONE HE WON'T SEE COMING.
I ***LIKE*** THAT IDEA!
SO, TELL ME, WHO ARE YOU THINKING...?
THE END.

I DON'T SUPPOSE WE'LL GET ***ANY*** ANSWERS NOW.
NO.
BUT WE DID HELP THOSE PEOPLE TO SAVE THEMSELVES. THAT ***MUST*** COUNT FOR SOMETHING.
IT COUNTS FOR ***EVERYTHING.***
SOLAS WILL BE LONG GONE BY NOW. WE MISSED OUR CHANCE.
WE MISSED ***THIS*** CHANCE. THERE'LL BE OTHERS.
COME ON. WE'D BETTER GO BEFORE THE CITY WATCH ARRIVE AND START ASKING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS.

Cover art for *Dragon Age: The Missing* #2
by Matt Taylor—February 2023.

Cover art for *Dragon Age: The Missing* #4
by Matt Taylor—April 2023.

Cover art for *Dragon Age: The Missing* #3 by Matt Taylor—March 2023.

COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS / Media Tie-in

DRAGON AGE™

THE MISSING

A NEW STORY LEADING DIRECTLY INTO *DRAGON AGE: DREADWOLF*, THE NEXT GAME IN BIOWARE'S LEGENDARY FANTASY SERIES!

Varric Tethras and Lace Harding have a tough job ahead of them. Tasked with finding their former friend Solas, the pair find themselves facing down a lot more than they bargained for. With a difference of opinion on how to approach their target, and new enemies around every corner, the duo might find they've bitten off more than they can chew.

Written by George Mann (*Motherbridge*) and featuring art by Kieran McKeown (*Halo: Lone Wolf*), Fernando Heinz Furukawa (*Dragon Age: Dark Fortress*), Tomás Aira (*The Whispering Dark*), and Álvaro Sarraseca (*Space Job*).

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